



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, March 3, 2014

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (14-1240)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chair Geneva Berger, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman,
Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Candace Cooper,
Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen,
Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner Dr. Sunny
Kang, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW and
Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused: Vice Chair Steven M. Olivas Esq., Commissioner Helen
Kleinberg, Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin and
Commissioner Becky A. Shevlin

Call to Order. (14-0884)

Chair Berger called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Introductions of March 3, 2014 meeting attendees. (14-0885)

Self-introductions were made.

2. Approval of the March 3, 2014 Meeting Agenda. (14-0886)

**On motion of Commissioner Kang, seconded by Vice Chair Friedman
(Commissioners Cooper, Kleinberg, Konigar-Macklin, Shevlin, and Vice
Chair Olivas being absent), this item was approved.**

3. Approval of the minutes from the meetings of February 3, 2014 and February 12, 2014. (14-0887)

On motion of Commissioner Sunny Kang, seconded by Vice Chair Susan Friedman (Commissioners Kleinberg, Konigar-Macklin, Shevlin, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Sorkin abstained from the February 12, 2014 minutes.

Attachments: [February 3, 2014](#)
 [February 12, 2014](#)

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's report for March 3, 2014 by Genevra Berger, Chair. (14-0888)

Chair Berger reported the following:

- **Bill Gould of First 5 LA has invited Commissioners to attend a Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) demonstration session on March 5, 2014. There is one available spot for the morning and afternoon session. If interested, please inform staff by the end of business day, March 3, 2014.**
- **Commissioners were invited to attend a DCFS data dashboard session. Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of the month at DCFS HQs. If interested, please coordinate with staff.**
- **The filing deadline for the Statement of Economic Interests Annual 2013/2014 is Tuesday, April 1, 2014. Staff has provided the forms to be filled out. If you have any additional questions, you may contact staff.**
- **Marcia Herman, a long time child advocate recently passed away. Ms. Herman was a teacher and researcher; she served on several commission/committees. Much of her research and advocacy focused on Child Abuse and Neglect.**

Commissioner Curry added that Ms. Herman was an active advocate up until about 80 years of age. One of her main interests was in advocating services for children with mental health problems.

By Common Consent, there being no objection Friedman (Commissioners Kleinberg, Konigar-Macklin, Shevlin, and Vice Chair Olivas being absent), this item was received and filed.

5. DCFS Director's report for March 3, 2014 by Philip Browning, Director, DCFS. (14-0482)

Director Browning reported the following:

- **An additional 200 Children's Social Workers (CSW) have been hired. New classes are taking place once a month. The new 52-week CSW Academy has had positive feedback. An update will be provided to the Board of Supervisors on the hiring of CSW's. Emphasis is being placed on training.**
- **The progress of the Katie A. Strategic Plan will be provided to the Board of Supervisors (Board). The exit conditions of Katie A. which requires the County to provide mental health care assessments and a Quality Service Review (QSR) that involves a selected number of case evaluations by Katie A. Panel members. The most recent QSR showed progress in scores.**
- **The County is currently in negotiations with the State pertaining to the Title IV-E Waiver. Recently, Florida's Waiver was approved at 1.6% as opposed to 3%. It is the intent to have the cost of living in Los Angeles County considered when determining the Waiver percentage. Los Angeles and Alameda Counties may be evaluated using two cohorts.**
- **DCFS is currently responding to the Board's recent request regarding the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection's (BRC) suggestions specific to Public Health Nurses. There are Public Health Nurses in the Department of Public Health (DPH) and DCFS. Discussions are underway as to having nurses in both Departments provide similar services. Funding realignment for Public Health Nurses is forthcoming.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Director Browning responded with the following:

- **In regards to the relationship with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) in ensuring continuity of care as required by the Katie A. settlement, a child is assessed at detainment to determine whether a full mental health assessment is needed. If a full assessment is necessary, referrals are provided in a short timeframe. In acute situations, a mental health referral is provided within one day. Exit conditions of the Katie A. settlement requires the Department to meet certain criteria.**

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- **Monthly status updates on the DCFS Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) are provided to the Board. Approximately one-third of the Strategic Plan has been completed. The Strategic Plan is being updated to remove completed items and add new objectives. Partnering with DMH on tracking psychotropic medication will be an addition.**
 - **Criteria and prioritization methods used to categorize the 839 recommendations issued to DCFS since 2008 as well as an update on completed recommendations will be provided to the Commission. Some recommendations were not implemented due to legislation.**

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Vice Chair Olivas, Commissioners Kleinberg, Konigar-Macklin, and Shevlin being absent), this item was received and filed.

6. Update on the Commission's activities.

- **Sylvia Drew Ivie, Commission Executive Liaison (Continued from the meetings of January 27, 2014 and February 3, 2014) (14-0423)**

This item was continued to the meeting of March 17, 2014.

III. PRESENTATION

7. Presentation by DCFS on the requirement of dual certification as foster and prospective adoptive parents for new foster families.

- **Diane Wagner, Division Chief, Adoptions and Permanency Resources Division**
- **Susan Tucker, Assistant Regional Administrator, Resource Family Assessment Units (14-0941)**

Ms. Wagner provided a brief history of the County's implementation of dual certification in 2004 and presented the following:

- **Research conducted from other jurisdictions requiring dual certification for foster parents found that the process for dual certification is a best practice. Foster families are better assessed, screened and the timeframe to permanency is decreased.**
- **The chart distributed shows a side-by-side comparison of the requirements for foster family home licensing/certification and foster family home and adoption dual certification. All requirements are the same with the exception of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal record clearance. Under dual certification, the assessing**

agency is able to obtain the full history of arrests and convictions, whereas prior to 2004 criminal record clearance for foster families included history of convictions only. Obtaining a full record provides the ability to screen for patterns of arrests as part of the assessment. The disadvantage of dual certification is that families need to undergo a two live scans; however solutions are being explored to mitigate this issue. Additionally, under dual certification, in depth interviews with adults living in the home are conducted as well as references obtained. Dual certification requires a very in-depth assessment.

- Families interested in becoming a foster home are well informed that the dual certification as a foster and adoptive family is not a commitment to adopt. Families interested in foster or adoption can change their mind at any point in the process.
- With the passage of Assembly Bill 340 in 2007, a pilot project was established in up to five counties to implement a streamlined, family friendly process for approving relatives, foster parents and adoptive parents to care for foster children. In 2012, five counties were selected for the early implementation of the pilot. Los Angeles County volunteered one office to be included in the pilot; however, it did not go forward as the Federal required that the whole county must participate. Presently, discussions are underway at the State and Federal level in an effort to allow the County to conduct the pilot in one office. Statewide rollout is expected in 2017.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, the presenters responded with the following:

- In regards to marijuana related arrests or convictions, Ms. Tucker explained that there are State guidelines for assessing potential criminal records. Certain arrests or convictions are not considered a detriment to the assessment.
- Ms. Wagner further explained that the implementation of the streamlined process of approving foster/adoptive families would lead to the County doing in its own home approvals. The dual live scan approval is resolved under the new process because there will be a home approval with one live scan.
- Ms. Wagner explained that the decrease in adoptions is partly related to the number of children in out-of-home care being lower compared to 2004. Additionally, staffing in the adoptions unit is down. The Department has targeted efforts to recruit and approve foster family

homes. Interested foster families are being prioritized over adoptive homes. There are many contributing factors to the decrease in adoptions.

Dual certification is a much more involved process and provides a more thorough assessment in terms of child well-being and safety.

Ivy Lewis Carey, Children's Law Center of Los Angeles commented that the intended goals of dual certification and concurrent planning is reunification, and if parental rights are terminated, having a home study approving the family for adoption, reduces the timeframe to permanency.

- Ms. Wagner clarified that efforts to placing a child with a relative are made prior to placement with a non-relative. There are foster families in the system not duly approved because they have been fostering prior to the implementation of dual certification.

The Commission expressed concerns with misinterpretation of dual certification for families interested in becoming a foster parent only, and the need for better communication. The intended purpose of dual certification is unclear. If reunification is the highest priority, then families wishing to adopt may not be as willing to work with the birth family towards reunification. Additionally, potential adoptive parents may be discouraged in becoming an adoptive parent because the child may be removed to be reunited with a birth parent or relative at any point in the process.

Ms. Wagner stated that safety and well-being is the highest priority, and decreasing the timeline to adoptions is an added benefit.

Director Browning stated that under the past requirement, if a foster parent was interested in adopting, they may not have been able due to certain criteria not being met., and reiterated that with dual certification, a foster parent that decides to adopt is already approved for adoption.

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Kleinberg, Konigar-Macklin, Shevlin, and Vice Chair Olivas, being absent), this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

8. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (14-0943)

There were none.

Announcements

9. Announcements for the meeting of March 3, 2014. (14-0944)

There were none.

Public Comment

10. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (14-0945)

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

Adjournment

11. Adjournment of the meeting of March 3, 2014. (14-0946)

The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.